

Message Text

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11

ACTION EUR-25

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FM LDEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9303

USMISSION GENEVA

INFO USIA WASHDC

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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GENEVA FOR USDEL CSCE

DEPT FOR EUR/SOV, USIA FOR IEE - ICS/E

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: UR OEXC CASC CGEN

SUBJ: US-SOVIET MARRIAGE - KNOX-UNAYAN

1. SUMMARY. FORMER OUTDOOR RECREATION GUIDE MARGARET KNOX CONTINUES TO RUN INTO BUREAUCRATIC STONE WALL IN YREVAN AS SHE PRESSES EFFORTS TO MARRY SOVIET CITIZEN. BEHIND SOVIET OFFICIALS' OBFUSCATIONS AND PROCRASTINATION, THERE APPEARS TO BE FIRM DIRECTIVE FROM MOSCOW FORBIDDING MARRIAGE. END SUMMARY.

2. KNOX TELEPHONED CONSOFF FROM YEREVAN AT OPENING OF BUSINESS MAY 30 TO REPORT ZAGS OFFICIAL MARTIROSIAN (MOSCOW 7721) INFORMED HER SAME MORNING THAT STANDARD EMBASSY "NO-IMPEDIMENT" STATEMENT WJS DEFECTIVE IN THAT IT WAS NOT COUNTERSIGNED BY SOVIET CONSUL, WASHINGTON. THEREFORE THERE COULD BE NO MARRIAGE. WHEN KNOX ARGUED HER CASE FURTHER, MARTIROSIAN SUGGESTED SHE "GO TO WASHINGTON" TO CLARIFY MATTER OR POSSIBLY SEEK SOVIET MFA ASSISTANCE IN MOSCOW.

3. CONSOFF TELEPHONED MARTIROSIAN AT MID-MORNING MAY 30, AND CHALLENGED HIS FINDING REGARDING ACCEPTABILITY OF EMBASSY "NO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IMPEDIMENT" STATEMENT. YEREVAN OFFICIAL HEMMED AND HAWED UNTIL

FINALLY ACKNOWLEDGING EMBASSY STATEMENT SEEMED IN ORDER. ON THE DEFENSIVE, MARTIROSIAN THEN ADMITTED HE HAD RECEIVED INSTRUCTION FROM MOSCOW NOT TO REGISTER KNOX MARRIAGE. MARTIROSIAN FURZYER LET SLIP THAT DEPUTY DIRECTOR NOTARIAL OFFICE MOSCOW ZAGS, ONE GRECHKOVA, WAS SOURCE OF INSTRUCTION. (IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH CONSULAR LOCAL MOMENTS LATER, MARTIROSIAN DECLINED TO REPEAT NAME OF MOSCOW OFFICIAL OR PROVIDE AER TELEPHONE).

4. AT MID-DAY EMBASSY TRACED GRECHKOVA THROUGH MINISTRY OF JUSTICE, BUT SHE DECLINED TO SPEAK TO CONSOFF, SAYING SHE WAS NOT AUTHORIZED TO SPEAK TO EMBASSY OFFICIALS. CONSOFF THEN ASKED MFA CONSULAR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL CHERNIGOV TO REACH GRECHKOVA AND ARRANGE APPOINTMENT WITH CONSOFF OR AT LEAST EXPLAIN TO HER THAT UNJUSTIFIED REFUSAL TO REGISTIR US-SOVIET MARRIAGE APPEARS TO VIOLATE FOREIGNERS' CIVIL RIGHTS. CHERNIGOV AGREED TO TRY, AND ADDED THAT ON PREVIOUS DAY HE HAD ASKED YEREVAN FOREIGN MINISTRY TO LOOK INTO CASE. (AMONG KNOX'S COMPLAINTS ABOUT SOVIET OFFICIALDOM IS THAT YEREVAN MFA HAS REFUSED TO TALK TO HER.)

5. CHERNIGOV REPORTED IN SUBSEQUENT CALL TO CONSOFF THAT GRECHKOVA INFORMED HIM IN RESPONSE TO HIS INQUIRY THAT QUESTION OF REGISTERING MARRIAGE IS DECIDED LOCALLY AND NO GUIDANCE HAS BEEN GIVEN BY HER OFFICE IN KNOX CASE. WHEN CONSOFF NOTED THAT DISCREPANCY BETWEEN GRECHKOVA AND MARTIROSIAN STATEMENTS SEEMED "STRANGE", CHERNIGOV AGREED BUT ADDED THIS IS "LIFE". HE SAID HE WOULD CONTINUE TO LOOK INTO PROBLEM.

6. KNOX TELEPHONED CONSOFF LATER SAME DAY TO SAY SHE INTENDS TO FLY TO MOSCOW JUNE 3 TO PRESS CASE HERE. SHE INDICATED HER AUTHORIZED PERIOD OF STAY IN USSR EXPIRES JUNE 4 AND YEREVAN AUTHORITIES HAVE REFUSED ANY EXTENSION.

7. COMMENT - WE UNDERSTAND BROTHER OF KNOX'S FIDANCE LEFT USSR ILLEGALLY SEVERAL YEARS AGO, AND AS A RESULT OFFICIAL HOSTILITY TO THIS RELATIONSHIP HAS BEEN MANIFEST FROM THE BEGINNING. EMBASSY ENTERTAINS LITTLE HOPE THAT ITS VARIOUS REPRESENTATIONS WILL ACTUALLY FORCE REVERSAL OF DIRECTIVE AGAINST REGISTRATION OF THIS MARRIAGE. ALTHOUGH KNOX HERSELF APPEARS TO BE IN NO-WIN SITUATION, WE BELIEVE REPRESENTATIONS AT DIFFERENT LEVELS IN SUCH CASES ARE WORTHWHILE. HZPEFULLY OVER PERIOD OF TIME THEY WILL SENSITIZE THOSE MANIPULATING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE ZAGS/KGB MARRIAGE LEVRS TO USG CONCERN ABOUT THE GENERALLY UNFAIR, DISCRIMINATORY SOVIET TREATMENT OF LMCITS IN MISS KNOX'S SITUATION. SUCH REPRESENTATIONS COMBINED WITH CONTINUING BAD WESTERN PUBLICITY IJSINDIVIDUAL CASES (E.G., GHARIBIAN, DAIGLE, NEMEC, ETC.) MAY ULTIMATELY STIMULATE SOMEONE OF INFLUENCE HERE TO CONSIDER ADOPTING ENLIGHTENED ATTITUDE TO US-SOVIET MARRIAGES. STOESSEL

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